

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 007122

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/05/2015

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: JORDANIAN REACTION TO DRAFT IRAQI CONSTITUTION

REF: A. AMMAN 7071

[B](#). AMMAN 6689

Classified By: DCM Daniel Rubinstein for Reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary and Comment. Post contacts outside the GOJ have been uniformly negative in their reaction to the draft Iraqi constitution, despite statements by the King and other senior officials (ref A) encouraging the continuation of the political process that produced the document. The highly critical comments from contacts and the press are alarmist, but reflect widespread public opinion in Jordan. Almost all of Jordan's Muslims are Sunnis, and many harbor deeply ingrained suspicions, if not outright prejudice, toward Iraqi Shiites. In addition, television images of Sunni groups in Iraq marching against the draft constitution has stoked fears, already high after the August 19 terrorist attack in Aqaba, that continuing violence could somehow spill over into Jordan (ref B). End Summary and Comment.

[1](#)2. (C) Former Jordanian ambassador to Iraq (and current Senator) Faleh Al-Taweel commended to us provisions related to political pluralism and religious freedom, but quickly added that most of the draft constitution was "very dangerous" to the unity of Iraq. In Taweel's opinion, the document, if ratified, will strengthen Iranian influence in southern Iraq, embolden the Kurds to eventually form a separate state, and possibly lead to a civil war among competing regions and ethnic groups. He chastised the U.S. for trying to drum up support for this "fake constitution," and warned that the marginalization of Sunni negotiators would encourage insurgents to step up their attacks. Oraib Rantawi, head of the Al-Quds Political Research Center, criticized the U.S. for "rushing" the constitutional process and insisting on completion of a document before a consensus could be reached. Rantawi said the draft constitution would institutionalize power in separatist Kurds and "men loyal to Iran," and pave the way for even more violence. Dr. Suleiman Arabiyat, a respected academic and president of Mu'tah University, denounced the draft constitution for "ignoring the Arab identity of Iraq." He stated that by sidelining the Sunni minority and giving ultimate political control to Shia and Kurdish leaders intent on pursuing their own personal agendas, the draft constitution would only prolong instability and violence in Iraq.

[1](#)3. (U) In general, commentary in the local press has echoed these criticisms, and reflects a highly pessimistic take on recent events in Iraq. Media commentator Raja Taleb, for example, noted that while it was an important first step, the draft constitution had given too much to the Shia and nothing to the Sunnis, who he insists are the unifying linchpin of Iraq. He believes that a coalition of Sunnis and Moqtada el-Sadr will defeat this draft on October 15, and send the political situation in Iraq back to zero.

[1](#)4. (U) GOJ officials, in contrast, have been more upbeat in their public reaction to events in Iraq. During a visit to Jeddah on September 4, the Jordanian state news agency (Petra) reported that Jordanian King Abdullah II and Saudi King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz jointly called for "all Iraqi people to participate in the political process," and confirmed their support for Iraq's security and stability.

HALE